

**Morehead State University**  
**Proposal for Adult Learners**

**1. Analysis of Need/Problem Statement**

The ALFI assessment identified several needs or problems that adult learners are encountering at Morehead State University. These needs were primarily related to availability and awareness of financial aid resources, especially for part-time students, credit for prior learning, flexibility in course delivery, and institutional climate.

**Financial Aid**

The ALFI assessment found that there is a discrepancy in perceptions concerning the availability of financial aid and payment options between students and administrators and staff. One of the needs identified by both students and administrators is the need for more aid for the part-time and working adult student. Although information about financial aid is available, students reported that they were not satisfied with the information about sources of financial aid that they were receiving. An issue may be that students do not know how to access the information.

**Flexible Academic Programming**

The students identified the lack of sufficient course offerings each term as a barrier to their ability to complete their program. The Institutional Self Assessment Survey (ISAS) revealed that the University used accelerated or modular approaches less than half of the time. Students may have extensive knowledge or skill in one concept that is being taught in a class. The student could not test out or demonstrate their knowledge. Instead they would be required to enroll in a three-hour course and repeat knowledge and skills that were proficient. The use of individualized or self-paced instructional formats at Morehead State University was much less than other institutions who participated in ISAS. The study found that there were few weekend and accelerated courses offered. If these formats were offered, they tended to be at the regional campuses.

**Credit for Prior Learning**

One of the significant findings by faculty, administrators, and students was the limited opportunity for credit for prior learning. The University did not have a system to assess prior learning credit except through CLEP, ACE military credit, and a limited number of challenge department exams. There was not a process to assess prior learning through the use of portfolios or student demonstrations. Few departments utilize such resources as ACE's National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training to award college credit for prior learning and/or

certifications through professional organizations. There is not a comprehensive information resource center that assists students to identify prior learning experiences and how that learning may equate to college credits. The lack of such a resource and advising contributed to the students' request for assistance with life and career planning prior to or at the onset of enrollment.

### **Campus Climate**

The ALFI assessment indicated that faculty and staff would benefit from identifying, exploring, and trying new approaches to the teaching and learning process. From the ISAS, faculty and administrators indicate that they believe Morehead State can significantly improve its performance in teaching adults. Opportunities for faculty and administrators to identify, explore, and try out new approaches to teaching and learning and assessment of student learning will improve the campus climate related to adult learners.

There was a difference in perception between University representatives and students on the issue of the availability of assistance with life and career planning and student support services. The University representatives rated the institution in the middle while the students rated their level of satisfaction with student support services and life and career planning issues as last. The institution perceived that individual assistance was available to help students solve unique problems, cope with stress of managing life, work, and college pressures while students did not perceive this assistance was available or they were dissatisfied. The students identified such issues as having a single point of contact for services or assistance, ability to talk with advisors about issues related to the stress of managing academics, work, life and other personal responsibilities, or having institutional staff and support available at convenient times and locations. The institutional representatives also identified these issues as areas that need to be explored.

### **Other Opportunities**

CAEL recommended that the University capitalize on its strength in delivering information through technology and use this strength in technology in marketing campaigns. In addition, students, administrators, faculty and staff agreed that the institution's performance on helping students to transition from the University to careers or other educational endeavors was above average. Here, too, CAEL recommended that marketing materials include reference to the university's support of guided pathways that lead from the institution's programs and services in order to ensure that students' learning will apply usefully to achieving their educational and career goals.

## **2. Project Objectives**

Objective 1: Increase the number of adult learners who enroll in Fall 2010 by fifty over last fall's enrollment.

Objective 2: Redesign three undergraduate classes into modules that can be offered beginning Fall 2010.

Objective 3: Develop a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) system to be implemented by Fall 2010.

Objective 4: Increase the availability of student support services for adult learners by establishing one-stop virtual resource center and extended hours.

Objective 5: Increase faculty and staff understanding and skills related to adult learners by offering six professional development opportunities in 2009 – 2010.

Objective 6: Develop a marketing and recruitment plan to be implemented in Spring 2010.

## **3. Description of Activities**

Objective 1: Increase the number of adult learners who enroll in Fall 2010 by twenty-five over last fall's enrollment.

Activities:

- a. In collaboration with Development Office and Foundation develop a plan to expand the institutional scholarships for full- and part-time adults.
- b. Implement fund raising activities at regional campuses in cooperation with University Advancement to increase amount of funds available for full-time and part-time adult learners at regional campuses.
- c. Identify part-time adults who are participating in Project Graduate and award a scholarship for one three-hour undergraduate class for their first semester.
- d. Publicize the availability of these funds to adults at the regional campuses and Project Graduate students.
- e. Convene groups of students and administrators to discuss perceptions and identify strategies to increase awareness of available financial aid and billing options.
- f. Create a virtual one-stop center for adult learners on the MSU website to promote the availability of financial assistance for adults.
- g. Develop marketing pieces targeted to adult learners that list financial aid resources for adults.

- h. Sponsor “College for a Day” events for potential adult learners and include information and work sessions on financial aid and application assistance.
- i. Partner with the adult learning centers in the region to make them aware of financial aid for adults.
- j. Partner with the Commonwealth Educational Opportunity Center, the Workforce Investment districts, KCTCS, Veterans organizations, KHEAA, KnowHow2GoKentucky, and other community partners to make adult learners aware of financial aid and assist them to apply for financial aid.
- k. Partner with employers to increase and publicize employer reimbursement programs.

Objective 2: Redesign three undergraduate classes into modules that can be offered beginning Fall 2010.

Activities:

- a. Provide professional development opportunities through seminars, conferences, and the Center for Teaching and Learning for faculty to redesign courses into modular formats.
- b. Identify courses that can be designed into one credit hour modules.
- c. Identify faculty to develop one credit hour modules as a face-to-face and/or online course.
- d. Offer and assess these courses.

Objective 3: Develop a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) system to be implemented by Fall 2010.

Activities:

- a. Establish a work group of faculty and staff to design a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program to recommend for adoption.
- b. Work group and other interested individuals will participate in and attend webinars, workshops, and conferences related to prior learning assessment sponsored by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and similar organizations.
- c. Utilize consultant services available through CAEL to develop the administrative policies and organizational structures for Prior Learning Assessment in accordance with the “Ten Standards for Assessing Learning.”
- d. Submit a recommendation to academic departments, colleges, and University curriculum committees, and academic affairs administration to implement a Prior Learning Assessment Plan (PLA) that includes portfolio assessment.
- e. Train faculty how to assess prior learning portfolios and provide feedback to students.
- f. Develop orientation seminar or course to familiarize students with the process of developing a prior learning portfolio.
- g. Implement and assess PLA.

- h. Collaborate with academic departments, colleges, and University curriculum committees to develop a process to review and award appropriate credit for professional development and trainings that have been reviewed and approved by the American Council on Education.
- i. Collaborate with academic departments, colleges, and University curriculum committees to develop a process to review and award appropriate credit for other certifications and trainings.
- j. Collaborate with the Registrar to develop a system to transcript the credit awarded through this process.
- k. Establish an online information clearinghouse to store information on the resources (CLEP, ACE, challenge exams, portfolios, etc.) available to adults to earn credit for prior learning.
- l. Orient faculty and staff to the resources and strategies to advise adult learners about their options regarding credit for prior learning.

Objective 4: Increase the availability of student support services for adult learners by establishing one-stop virtual resource center and extended hours.

Activities:

- a. Establish a one-stop virtual resource center for adult learners that link the learners to online assistance and face-to-face assistance on each campus.
- b. Identify persons on each campus and online to serve as advocates for adult learners to offer assistance in coping with home, work, and school.
- c. Provide professional development activities for student services staff to train them in advising and working with adult students.
- d. Embed a student services link in all Blackboard course shells for online learners.
- e. Extend hours of key offices so adult learners can contact student support offices outside of the 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. time frame.
- f. Utilize and promote MSU “Live Help” and chat among adult learners.
- g. Schedule regular visits by student services offices and program advisors to the regional campuses.
- h. Designate times that students can use the interactive television or webcams to interact with student services and program advisors.
- i. Establish an online social network for MSU adult learners to interact with other MSU adults learners.
- j. Provide professional development in career planning through the Office of Career Services for staff and advisors who are primarily working with adult learners.
- k. Design an orientation process for adult learners that faculty and staff can use to assist adult learners to develop an educational plan based on their work, life, and educational experiences.
- l. Provide professional development for faculty and staff in academic advising with adult learners.

- m. Establish an online information clearinghouse to store information on the resources (CLEP, ACE, challenge exams, portfolios, etc.) available to adults to earn credit for prior learning.
- n. Partner with the local Adult Learning Centers to assist adult learners to acquire the academic skills necessary to be successful in college.

Objective 5: Increase faculty and staff understanding and skills related to adult learners by offering six professional development opportunities in 2009 – 2010.

Activities:

- a. Offer workshops on adult learning, advising adults, prior learning assessment, course redesign, and teaching adults through the Center for Teaching and Learning.
- b. Offer workshops for faculty and staff through the Adult Education Academy.
- c. Participate in webinars, online courses and professional development conferences sponsored by CAEL and other organizations related to prior learning assessment and adult learning.
- d. Assist faculty through the Center for Teaching and Learning to use the knowledge and skills to redesign courses and implement teaching strategies.

Objective 6: Develop a marketing and recruitment plan to be implemented in Spring 2010.

Activities:

- a. Develop a marketing plan for adult learners.
- b. Develop print and electronic materials targeted toward adult learners.

#### **4. Evaluation Plan**

Objective 1: Increase the number of adult learners who enroll in Fall 2010 by twenty-five over last fall's enrollment.

##### Formative Evaluation

- a. Track number of events/presentations targeted toward adults monthly
- b. Track inquiries from adults monthly
- c. Track admission applications from adults monthly
- d. Track acceptances monthly

##### Summative Evaluation

- a. Track the number of adult learners enrolled in Fall 2010
- b. Compare number of adults enrolled in Fall 2009 with Fall 2010 to determine whether objective achieved
- c. Track the number of scholarships awarded to adult learners in Fall 2010

Objective 2: Redesign three undergraduate classes into modules that can be offered beginning Fall 2010.

Formative Evaluation

The achievement of the following milestones will be monitored.

- a. Three courses and faculty identified by October 2009
- b. Faculty complete training by December 2009
- c. Faculty complete redesign and submit for curriculum approval by May 2010
- d. Courses scheduled for Fall 2010

Summative Evaluation

- a. Track the number of students enrolled in courses in Fall 2010
- b. Track academic performance of students in courses
- c. Assess student learning outcomes of students in these courses

Objective 3: Develop a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) system to be implemented by Fall 2010.

Formative Evaluation

The achievement of the following milestones will be monitored.

- a. Faculty & staff PLA team identified by September 2009
- b. PLA team complete training from CAEL by December 2009
- c. Consultant services from CAEL will be finalized by September 2009
- d. Faculty will participate in PLA training by May 2010
- e. PLA team will submit PLA model for curriculum approval by May 2010
- f. PLA resource center will be available to students by May 2010

Summative Evaluation

- a. Track the number of students earning credit through PLA in Fall 2010
- b. Track PLA methodology (CLEP, ACE, Challenge, etc.)
- c. Track number of credit hours earned through PLA

Objective 4: Increase the availability of student support services for adult learners by establishing one-stop virtual resource center and extended hours.

Formative Evaluation

The achievement of the following milestones will be monitored.

- a. Student services team identified and meet by September 2009
- b. Student service delivery system for adult learners including adults at regional campus and online designed by October 2009
- c. Student services module imbedded into Blackboard course shell by August 2009

#### Summative Evaluation

- a. Track the number of adult learners utilizing extended hours and student services at regional campuses and online in 2009-2010 academic year
- b. Assess adult learner satisfaction with student services

Objective 5: Increase faculty and staff understanding and skills related to adult learners by offering six professional development opportunities in 2009 – 2010.

#### Formative Evaluation

The achievement of the following milestones will be monitored.

- a. Topics for workshops determined by faculty and staff adult learner work team by September 2009
- b. Workshop presenters identified by September 2009
- c. Workshops scheduled with the Center for Teaching and Learning and Adult Education Academy by September 2009

#### Summative Evaluation

- a. Track the number of faculty and staff attending workshops
- b. Assess the satisfaction of attendees with the usefulness and effectiveness of the workshops

Objective 6: Develop a marketing and recruitment plan to be implemented in Spring 2010.

#### Formative Evaluation

The achievement of the following milestones will be monitored.

- a. Adult learner marketing team identified by August 2009
- b. Adult learner marketing and recruitment plan approved by December 2009

#### Summative Evaluation

- a. Adult learner marketing and recruitment plan implemented by January 2010
- b. The effectiveness of the plan is assessed by September 2010



## 5. Financial information

Project/Initiative by Objective	Expenditure
Objective 1	
Scholarship for Project Graduate first time students – \$702 per 3 hr class x 10 students	7,020
Objective 2	
Professional development (registration & travel) for attendance at conferences or webinars related to course redesign	3,000
Objective 3	
Professional development for PLA team to attend CAEL training or participate in online seminars	5,000
CAEL Consultants on campus – 3 days x \$2,000/day	6,000
Objective 4	
Technology and support (mileage) to implement student services	1,000
Objective 5	
Professional development for faculty and staff (registration, travel & presenter fees)	3,000
Objective 6	
Marketing materials (print & electronic), technology and support for events (College for a Day, etc.)	4,980
Total	30,000